

# OUR CHURCH - WHY ARE THE SYRIANS CALLED JACOBITES ?

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INTRODUCTION TO THE THREE UNIVERSAL SYNODS ('saarvathrika sunnahadosukal', where the Christian Church was 'one'): The Church (of N.T) was established according to St. Matthew 16: 15 -19; in part as the 'Mission of Incarnation' of Christ on earth, to save the entire mankind (1 Cor. 12: 12, 13; Galatians 3: 25- 29) from 'eternal death', due to Adam's disobedience in Eden. The Church was established by Christ, the Messiah on the 'KEEPAH' ('rock' in Aramaic Syriac) of 'faith', as retold by the apostle St. Peter that - "YOU ARE SON OF THE LIVING GOD" (as enlightened him from Heaven) for which he was made the Head apostles/or, the 'Patriarch'; to be the Shepherd (to feed) His Church as per, St. John 21: 15- 17 by our Lord Messiah before His ascension to Heaven. St. Peter found his 'Throne' (seat, as H.Q) at Antioch (the original center of Christianity- Acts 14: 25, 26; 11:26) in AD 37 (on 22nd Feb. in the annals of history).

Whenever there arose schisms in faith matters, they were testified by Bishops in the 'Holy Synods' (ref. Acts 15: 1- 20), based on the Dogmas (which means, the 'faith', that is inevitable for our Eternal-life/ Salvation), the teachings of Christ and his apostles, and the writings of those learned fathers of the first and successive early centuries and their traditions are examined thoroughly and discussed (by the help of Holy Spirit - Ephesians 4: 4).

■ The three major heresies & schisms in the 'One Church': Under such circumstances, there arose the heresies of ARIUS [ the Bishop of Alexandria, regarding the Humanity of Christ - He taught that, Christ was not the Creator, but a creature; and that his body was not real, but that He feigned to be a Man]; MACEDONIOUS [ The Patriarch of Constantinople, regarding the Holy Ghost that - "He is not the Creator, but only a creature; and that He proceeds not from the Father, but from the Son, as though he should obey the injunctions of the Father and the Son"]; and NESTORIUS [ The Patriarch of Antioch, regarding the

the Son even in His incarnation, and that He is a separate being; and NESTORIOUS [The Patriarch of Constantinople. He erroneously taught the 'Divinity of Christ' that - "the Virgin Mary brought forth only the Human Body of the Son of God, and not his Divinity; and that He grew up, His Divinity present with sometimes and absent sometimes from, that Body - and that there are two distinct Natures, two distinct persons, and two distinct Wills in Messiah - and therefore that, the Virgin Mary should not be called 'the Mother of God', but only 'the mother of the Son of God or Messiah'.] These were the reasons to assemble the three Universal Synods at Nicaea (AD325), Constantinople (AD381) and Ephesus (AD431) respectively.

NICENE CREED (Or, 'Nikya Viswasapramanam'):- The faith dogmas and doctrines (code of practise/ 'nadapadikramangal', lent, feast etc.) of the Church by the (said) three universal Synods were stipulated and proclaimed that, 'nothing more could be added to or subtracted from or subjected to any change from what have been already decided in the three Synods as "One, Catholic (means, 'for all') Church" that we now recite as - the 'Nicene Creed'/or, 'Nikya Viswasapramanam'.

\* In the Synod of Nicaea, recognized and declared the books of Gospels & scripture :- In addition, it was in the Synod of Nicaea that, four gospels ("aevengelion") were decided as testimony ('sakshyam') from among the many available. Again, after deep perusal of the writings (that lie scattered here and there), it was fixed the books of the Old & New Testaments for the scripture, and in order to make sure/ fool proof; it was counted, how many books are there in total, and in each of which, enumerated the no. of letters from beginning to end- so that nobody make any changes to it.

\* Division of Church under Patriarchal jurisdictions (Ref. Bar Haebraus Hoodaya canon - chapter 7, posuko,1 of Nikya; also Malankara Edavakapathrika, Vol. 5, issue 7):- With the growth of Christian Church to the four corners of the world- it was decided to divide into four equal jurisdictions (for the ease of governance) in the Synod of Nicaea in AD 345: A. (original) Antioch and to the East (Asia); B. At Rome, for the areas to the West of Europe; C. At Constantinople to the East and North of Europe; and D. At Alexandria for Africa, as mutually exclusive regions of administration under the authority of respective Patriarchs. Understand; the Holy Apostolic Church was one in faith and traditions having one Dogma.

Thus, the Christian Church remained 'one' in faith until the year AD 451 when the Synod of Chalcedon was forcefully convened by Pope (the title taken later on) Leo 1 of Rome for no specific reason, against what has been declared earlier. In this Synod, heated arguments took place - Antioch and Alexandria stood in the original faith, whereas Constantinople

supported Rome; and the Church split into two. This was the vertical split that has occurred first in the history of Christian Church, that resulted subsequently in an umpteen no. of the factions, to its state as we see nowadays.

Now,

[☆ Condensed-excerpts from the book- "THE SYRIAN CHRISTIANS OF MALABAR, OTHERWISE CALLED THE CHRISTIANS OF St. THOMAS"; Written by, Rev. Philipose Corepiscopus, Edavazhikal (the elder brother of Mar Severious Geevarghese, the 1st Metropolitan of Knanaya Diocese) in 1869.]

Q. 1. What is the belief of the Syrians with regard to God?

A. They believe in the Holy Trinity (Gen. 1: 26, 11: 7), which is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost (Matt. 28: 19), the only (1Tim. 2: 5; Mark 12: 29, 32) and true God.

Q. 2. How do they believe in Father?

A. They believe in Him, the Almighty creator of heaven and earth, and of all things both visible and invisible (Rom. 11: 36; 1 Cor. 8: 6; Eph. 3: 9).

Q. 3. How do they believe in Son?

A. They believe Him to be the Only-begotten (John 1: 14, 18) Son of the Father, before all worlds (Rom. 16: 25; 1 Cor. 2: 7; Eph. 3: 9; 2 Tim. 1: 9; Titus 1: 2; 1 Peter 1: 20), the true God (Rom. 9: 5; Acts 20: 28; Heb. 1: 8; 1 John 5: 20), One equal to the Father; and that, for the salvation of Mankind, He of His own will (John 10: 18; Gal. 1: 4) descended from Heaven, and became Man, having taken His body from the Holy Ghost (Matt. 1: 10; Luke 1: 35, 43) and from the virgin Mary the Mother of God; and that He suffered and crucified (Matt. 27: 35; Acts 2: 23), dead (Rom. 5: 8; Rom. 6: 10; Rom. 14: 15; 1 Cor. 15: 3), and buried (1 Cor. 15: 4), and that the third day He rose (Matt. 28: 6; Rom. 1: 4; 1 Cor. 15: 4, 20), and ascended to Heaven, and sat on the right hand of the Father (Mark 16: 19; Acts 7: 55), and that He come in great glory to judge both the quick and the dead (Matt. 25: 31; Rom. 14: 10; 2 Cor. 5: 10; 1 Pet. 4: 5; Rev. 20: 12).

TOME OF LEO:

[The factors leading to the Synod of Chalcedon: - Pope Leo, adopting certain heresies of Arius, Macdonius and Nestorius (cause for the universal Synods of Nicaea (AD325), Constantinople (AD381) and Ephesus (AD431) and made a mixture of the true faith with false doctrines (asserting); known in the history as 'Tome of Leo'] :

1. That the two natures of Christ - His Divinity and His Humanity, are like 'oil and water' (whereas by nature, like 'wine and water', which we believe in). That He is One Person; and that His Divinity had gone from Him at the time of His death (whereas, infact His Divinity never left His Humanity, even at death).

2. That that the Holy Ghost proceeds from both the Father and the Son (whereas, H.Ghost proceeds only from Father, and that Father, Son and H. Ghost are one in the Trinity of God, which we believe).

\* The Synod of Chalcedon of AD 451: -

Having thus drawn up his faith, and a certain liturgy, he, by the favour of Pulcheria, the queen of Rome, and her husband Marcionus, whom he had gained over to his interest; summoned a Synod at Chalcedon in AD 451 consisting of 636 Bishops and Priests (double the number 318, those who were present at the Synod of Nicaea with the view to make this meeting more remarkable, and its Canons more stable). Leo 1 forced these 636 persons to sign the Institutes against their will; threatening those who would not conform to this Council with severe punishments.

Thus he propogated these doctrines in all those countries then included in the Roman Empire; and on the Pope sending the large book (as TOME OF LEO) containing the new rules and offices for the members of this Synod to read and affix their signatures - Dioscoros, the Patriarch of Alexandria, took and read it, and then send it back, having written on it; "He who conforms to this (these) rules is cursed", and affixed his signature to it. This caused a great quarrel, and the Pope having taken Dioscoros and his partisans, confined them on the sea-shore, where they died. And the Pope, it is said altered certain words in the Bible, inorder that those errors which he supported in the Synod should be justified. Besides, he made some alterations in the (Nicene) Creed, to incorporate his new doctrines - For there is some difference between the Creeds of the Italians, Maronites, and Chaldeans, who are all Papists.

Note:-

Q1. Our (Syrians and Alexandrians) creed concerning the union of Christ's Divinity with His Humanity?

A. Not like oil and water, but like wine and water they are joined together and are become one; and we believe in Him as Perfect God and Perfect Man, both at His Conception and Birth, His sufferings, Death, and Resurrection, and at His Coming at the last day; and that H had not destroyed (did not destroy) His Humanity by His Divinity, nor His Divinity by His Humanity.

humanity.

Refer: Matthew 1: 23      Coloss. 2: 9  
          John 1: 24          1 Cor. 15: 47  
          John 15: 26        1 John 5: 20.

Q2. How do we believe in Holy Ghost?

A. We believe that He (H.Ghost) proceeds from the Father, and that He is equal to both Father and Son.

Refer: John 1: 32              Matthew 3: 16  
          John 14: 16, 26.      Mark 1: 10.  
          John 15: 26

■ Thus we affirm our faith by the three Universal Synods of Nicaea (AD325), Constantinople (AD 381), and Ephesus (AD431) together as 'One', completing the "Nicene Creed" (that we recite as "Nikya Viswasapramanam") when the Christian Church was 'one' known as - "Catholic Church" (means, for all). This continued until AD 451, when the Pope of Rome (Leo I) separated at Chalcedon, as described above. But, the Church at Antioch [the Syrians, in Malankara including us- the Jacobite (Knanaya) under it], and the Church at Alexandria (the Coptic) remain 'One' in faith till date - "The One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church".

Now

● WHY ARE THE SYRIANS CALLED JACOBITES?  
( For Chalcedonian persecutions)

A. When Nestorius and his partisans insisted on many Bishops, and people conforming to and using the newly-made doctrine, and threatened those who refused compliance (the Chalcedonians); Saint Mar JACOB BOORDANA (Baradaeus), who was clothed with skin - [[note, Hebrews 11: 36, 37 - എബ്രായർ 11:36 മറ്റുചിലർ കല്ലേറേറ്റു; വീണ്ടും ചിലർ വാളിന്റെ വായ്ത്തലയാൽ മരിച്ചു. വേറെ ചിലർ, ഞാൻ വാളാൽ അറക്കപ്പെട്ടു. മറ്റുചിലർ ആട്ടിൻകുട്ടികളുടെയും കോലാടുകളുടെയും തോലുകൾ ധരിച്ചും ബുദ്ധിമുട്ടിയും, ഞെരുങ്ങിയും, പീഡിപ്പിക്കപ്പെട്ടും കൊണ്ട് ചുറ്റി സഞ്ചരിച്ചു. 11:37 അവർ വിജനപ്രദേശത്തും, മലകളിലും, പാറപ്പിള്ളിപ്പുകളിലും, ഗുഹകളിലും ഉഴലുന്നവരെപ്പോലെയായി.]], coming to know of this from God, when he was living in the woods (note, Hebrews 11: 38), how the Nestorians had subverted and hindered the true faith came out from his seclusion and boldly exhorted many, and turned them to the true faith.

Therefore they were called JACOBITES, by which we understand those who were redeemed from the Nestorians by the means of Mar Jacob. [As per my understanding, the Syrians took the title as a mark of pride; like how the name 'Christians' (Acts 11: 26) was accepted as the title by the followers of Christ with pride, when they were ridiculed by the 'non-believer Jews' by that name .]

(( It is written that, Mar Jacob's cloth became old and stiff like hide, by continuous wear. He ordained 1,20,000 priests, 89 bishops, and 2 nos. Patriarchs- one for Antioch and one for Alexandria. In fact, Saint Mar Jacob Boordana's, were of a super-human effort, instigated and conferred upon him by God - Excerpt from "Suriyani Sabha; charithravum, visvasasathyangalum", by Dr. Kurian Arch Corepiscopa, Kaniamparambil.))

LASTLY,

■ A word about the book- "THE SYRIAN CHRISTIANS OF MALABAR, OTHERWISE CALLED THE CHRISTIANS OF St.THOMAS": This book was not published in India (a copy available with me). It contains all the faith/ dogmatic matters, history of Church as well as the explanations exposing the fallacies in the stand of Roman Catholicism, Reformation churches, the schisms of Mathews Athanasius in Malankara etc., based on the relevant scriptural supports. This book explains in the form of question/ answers (81 Nos. in total) including the 'Royal Proclamation' from the Maharaja of Travancore enjoyed by (the removed) Mathews Athanasius, and also includes appendix. This book was edited and published in England by Rev. G.B Howard B.A in AD 1869. This was a time when C.M.S Missionaries gained access in the Jacobite Syrian Church in Malankara by way of imparting English education in the College at Kottayam.

(( In the words of Rev. J.B Howard from preface : - A similar desire led, in the early part of the present century, to the establishment of a College at Cottayam under the auspices of the 'Church Missionary Society'; but the position of that Society in regard to the native Church has for very many years past has been of violent antagonism. I had myself cautiously hinted at the possibility of a renewal of our relations with this interesting Church some years ago-cautiously, because I was then to a certain extent aware of their Jacobitism.

It was sent to me more than two years ago for publication, but as no funds were sent to meet the expense, and none could be expected so far as the Author was concerned, I was unable to put it at once into printer's hands. However, as I had promised my native friend to do what I could, and as I had led him, I fear somewhat too rashly, to expect that I should be successful in getting his work published, I have determined to issue it without further delay.))





**Archbishop of Canterbury (middle),  
Patriarch Ignatius Peter III/IV (right),  
and Bishop Gregorius Abdullah of Jerusalem,  
later Ignatius Abdullah (left), in London.**

Above :

His Holiness (Moran Mor) Ignatius Peter III, Patriarch of Antioch and all the East:  
Here, Moran's visit to Great Britain prior to His Malankara visit, with the intention of educating the Church of England with regard to the Faith and dogmas of the Syrian Church. By this, the Patriarch could nullify the privileges enjoyed by Mar. Mathews Athanasius ((th errant 'cursed' by the Church (or, cast 'mah'ron' in Syriac - vide, 1 Timothy 1: 20; for attempting to change the dogmas of the Church); and that the removed Bishop Mar Athanasius, who was earlier ordained from the Throne of St. Peter at Antioch by HH Ignatius Elias II Patriarch, has led the 'Reformation/Naveekarana' group in Malankara)), aided by the 'Royal Proclamation' from the Maharajah of Travancore, at the insistence of the British



Royal Proclamation from the Maharajah of Travancore, at the instance of the British Missionaries (as empowered by the British authorities), here in Moran's Diocese in Malabar (India).

HH Patriarch came to Malankara then, and established 7no. Dioceses (viz; Angamali, Koc Kandanad, Kottayam, Niranam, Thumbamon and Kollam) with Bishops ordained for each diocese - (Pl. note that Parumala Thirumeni, Mor Gregoriose Geevarghese was ordained by HH Ignatius Peter III Patriarch of Antioch in AD 1876) - A proper administration set up was made in Malankara by the convening of Synod at Marthoman church, Mulanthuruty in AD1876. Patriarch devised the right code of conduct for the clergy, deacons etc., proper conduct of Church proceedings in matters of celebration of the H. Sacraments, lents, feasts etc., based on the dogmas and doctrines of the Church. Modelled 'Salmoosa'/contract of Bishop-ordination, proper diocese-committee, payment of Reeseesa to Antioch etc. In short this Patriarch is considered as a great Scripture scholar, and an efficient Church-administrator of the Throne of St. Peter at Antioch.

HH Patriarch Ignatius Peter III, paved the way for deciding the newly ordained Bishop Mar Dionasious Joseph V, Pulicottil as the just Malankara Metropolitan (in place of the deposed Mathews Athanasius), through a Court of law of the land - which fruited, later on by the famous "Royal Court Judgment" of 1889AD, in favour of Mor. Dionasious Joseph V, as the just "Malankara Metropolitan" of the (Jacobite) Syrian Church in Malankara, for the Trusts [[ like Kottayam Pazhaya Seminary, the Trust money put on fixed deposit (popularly known as "vattippanam"), and other common properties]] of the Church. The Reformation group left the Jacobite Syrian Church to form Marthoma church.

Philip Abraham,  
Edavazhikal.



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